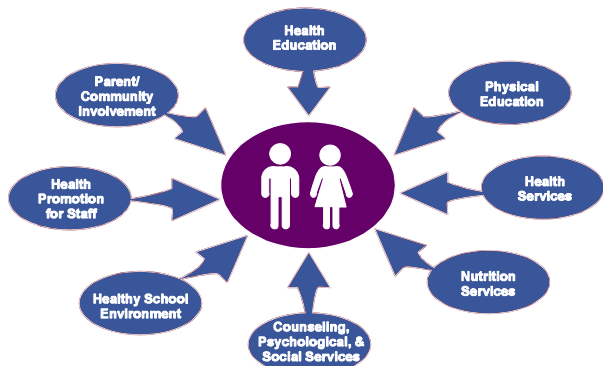


## How the *School Health Index* Works

The health and safety habits of students are influenced by the entire school environment. Therefore, the *Index* has eight different modules, each corresponding to a component of a coordinated school health program:

### Coordinated School Health Program



A team made up of members of different groups within the school—parents, teachers, students, administrators, other staff members, and concerned community members—is responsible for completing a questionnaire for each module. Responses to each questionnaire are scored to help you identify your school's strengths and weaknesses.

The *School Health Index* includes a Planning for Improvement section to help your school develop an action plan for improving student health. Your school's results from the *Index* can help you include health promotion activities in your overall School Improvement Plan. With the growing recognition of the relationship between health and academic performance, completing the *School Health Index* can become one of your school's important *Leave No Child Behind* educational reform activities.

The *School Health Index* is **your** school's self-assessment tool, and it should not be used to compare schools or evaluate the staff. There is no such thing as a passing grade on the *School Health Index*. You should use your *Index* scores only to help you understand your school's strengths and weaknesses and to develop an action plan for improving your promotion of health and safety.

The *School Health Index* is available at no cost and can be completed in as little as 5 hours. Many of the improvements that you'll want to make after completing the *Index* can be done with your existing staff and resources. For those priority actions that do require new resources, your *School Health Index* results can provide information needed to stimulate school board and community support for school health programs and for funding requests. A small investment of time can pay big dividends in improving students' well-being, readiness to learn, and prospects for a healthy life.

To obtain a copy of the *School Health Index*, choose one of the following options:

- Download from CDC Web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/SHI/>
- Request by e-mail: [healthyyouth@cdc.gov](mailto:healthyyouth@cdc.gov)
- Request by telephone: 888-231-6405
- Request by fax: 888-282-7681

When ordering, please specify either the elementary school version or the middle/high school version.



## School Health Index

### A Self-Assessment and Planning Guide



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

## Helping Students Get Ready to Learn

Promoting healthy and safe behaviors among students is an important part of the fundamental mission of schools: to help young people acquire the knowledge and skills to become healthy and productive adults. By promoting health and safety behaviors, schools can increase students' capacity to learn, reduce absences, and improve physical fitness and mental alertness.

To help schools meet this challenge, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed the *School Health Index*. This self-assessment and planning guide will enable you to

- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of your school's health promotion policies and programs.
- Develop an action plan for improving student health.
- Involve teachers, parents, students, and the community in improving school policies and programs.

## Focusing on Key Health and Safety Issues: Physical Activity, Healthy Eating, Tobacco-Use Prevention, and Safety

The third edition of the *School Health Index* addresses behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and illness among young people and adults in the United States:

- Physical inactivity.
- Poor eating habits.
- Tobacco use.
- A wide range of safety-related behaviors.

Future editions also will address other health issues that have a major impact on the current and future health of young people, such as

- Asthma management.
- Food safety.
- Sexual behaviors that result in HIV infection, other sexually transmitted diseases, or unintended pregnancy.
- Sun safety.

## Here Are the Facts...

- Regular physical activity helps build and maintain healthy bones and muscles and reduce fat, but 35% of young people in grades 9–12 do not engage in vigorous physical activity on a regular basis.
- Research suggests that skipping breakfast can affect children's intellectual performance, and even moderate under-nutrition can have lasting effects on cognitive development.
- Cigarette smoking is responsible for more than 400,000 deaths each year. About 29% of students in grades 9–12 are current smokers. Approximately 80% of adult tobacco users initiated smoking before 18 years of age.
- The percentage of children and adolescents who are overweight has nearly tripled since 1980: more than 15% are now overweight. Overweight children are more likely to have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and high insulin levels. They are also more likely to become overweight adults, who are at increased risk for heart disease and diabetes.
- Two-thirds of all deaths among children and adolescents result from injury-related causes: 32% from motor

vehicle injuries, 14% from all other unintentional injuries, 11% from homicides, and 9% from suicides.

- Nearly 4 million children and adolescents are injured at school each year. The costs associated with these injuries are large. Annual medical spending on school injuries has been estimated at \$3.2 billion.

## What the *School Health Index* Can Do for Your School

The *School Health Index* will provide structure and direction to your school's efforts to improve health and safety policies and programs. First released in 2000, the *Index* has been used by schools in nearly every state and in Canada. The *Index* is designed for use at the local level. However, with appropriate adaptation, it could be used at the district level as well, especially if the district has only a few schools and those schools have similar policies and programs. School administrators and staff members who have used the *Index* have said,

- "The *School Health Index* was easy to use and enabled us to clearly identify what is working and what needs to be improved."
- "It's a real energizer—it makes you think of ideas that are relatively easy to implement."
- "The school staff had a very positive attitude toward the *Index*. They liked its comprehensive view of health promotion and its involvement of many different stakeholders."